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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT FRIDAY, May 16, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "CARROTS". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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What I have to say today concerns one of the most beautiful of all the members of the vegetable family--the shapely, golden yellow carrot. And because the beauty of the carrot is a lot more than skin deep, I'd like to pass on to you some information from the U. S. Department of Agriculture--information that has to do with the place of carrots in our every day meals.

Here's the way the home economics experts in the Department of Agriculture sum up the good points of the carrot. They say--

"Today's carrot is about all you could ask of any one vegetable. It tastes good. It is fashionably streamlined. It is an attractive color. And it rates high with nutritionists."

As you know--it's been only in late years that everyone has spoken so highly of carrots. For it wasn't so long ago that the only carrots that were sold on the market came in a very mature stage. Usually they were very big carrots--and so hard that only cows really liked to eat them raw. These old-time carrots did not have the gently sloping curves from leafy top to root tips that our modern carrots have. And usually they were very pale yellow in color--strong in flavor--and woody in texture.

We owe our modern satisfactory carrot partly to better means of transportation and distribution and partly to the plant scientists.

"Now we can get fresh, young carrots the year round--carrots with good color that are shipped under refrigeration straight from producing areas to many

parts of the country. For example, right now four States in the South and West are supplying carrots to markets the country over. The ones you buy right from your grocery store if they are not grown locally probably come from Arizona, California, Louisiana, or Texas."

As for the plant scientists--they've been working hard to get carrots with long, tapering roots--and roots that are free from hard and woody cores. They are working for more tender carrots--and for smoother carrots that can be scraped more easily and with less waste. Also--in breeding for the ideal carrot-- they're trying to get one with a deeper orange color throughout the whole root.

When plant scientists get carrots of deeper orange color--they are also improving the food value of the carrot.

"For the yellow pigment that gives the carrot its color is called carotene. And carotene is a substance that human beings can change to vitamin A in their bodies. Therefore, the deeper the color of the carrot--the better a source of vitamin A it is.

"Today scientists often use pure carotene for many of their experiments. They can get this from carrots in the form of beautiful orange-yellow crystals. Ordinarily, though, this carotene is sold in solution with some oil as a base."

But getting back to carrots as carrots--and their place in the diet. Here's what the home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have to say about that.

"Carrots are included in all lists of 'protective foods'--as are other green and yellow-colored vegetables. Nutrition experts advise at least one serving a day of either a yellow vegetable or a green leafy vegetable--chiefly because of the carotene these vegetables contain. But in addition to their carotene content--carrots score on two other counts. They are good source of both calcium and riboflavin--two other important food values."

So much for the why's of eating carrots--now just a few pointers from these same home economics experts on the how's.

"The carrot is a regular vegetable-of-all-trades in the kitchen," they say. "It is part and parcel of numerous stews, pot roasts, soups, and chowders. The combination of carrots and peas is getting to be almost as well-established as succotash. And carrots go into any number of vegetables and nut loaves, into sandwiches, and into many vegetable combinations."

Personally, I think one of the best things about the modern carrot is that it is so good to eat raw.

"Raw carrot is one of the very best of all vegetables for a salad. Its mild flavor and bright color combine well with the distinctive flavor and pale color of celery--cabbage--and cucumbers. Serve the carrot in slender sticks cut lengthwise of the root. Or cube the carrots--or shred them on a cheese grater."

Many people like shredded carrot served alone. But it is even better in combination with shredded cabbage--maybe some ground peanuts--held together with a salad dressing. Or, another favorite is shredded carrot gelatine salad. Either oranges or pineapple are good taste companions for carrots in gelatin salads.

Another good way to serve raw carrots is in sandwiches. You can make a good crunchy sandwich filling by combining grated carrot--chopped peanuts--and salad dressing. Or, a simpler one is made by creaming butter--adding finely chopped carrots, and a little salt.

As for the technique of cooking carrots--the home economists say there's hardly anything to it. For no matter how you cook carrots, their color will stay bright throughout. And their vitamin A value will remain intact at all ordinary cooking temperatures. If you want to save the calcium in carrots, though, it is best to use as little water as possible when you cook them, and to serve the liquid with the cooked carrots.

And now--before I close this broadcast on carrots, I'd like to make just one final suggestion. If you are serving carrots by themselves as a vegetable, there's nothing better than melted butter, finely chopped parsley, and a little lemon juice to dress them up a little. The butter and the lemon juice bring out the good mild carrot flavor. And the green parsley adds attractive color contrast for the orange yellow carrots.

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